

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

OWEN ON SPIRITUALISM.

THE HABITABLE LAND BETWEEN THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT.—By ROBERT DALE OWEN. 12mo, \$1.50. G. W. Carleton & Co.

Mr. Owen takes his point of departure in this volume from a rather ingenious comparison between the phenomena of Spiritualism and the discovery of a new planet. One of the most remarkable triumphs of modern astronomy was the prediction of the existence and approximate place in the heavens of the planet Neptune prior to actual observation. It was the conclusion from certain perturbing influences, the effect of which had been accurately calculated, that led two different astronomers to the grand discovery. In like manner, argues Mr. Owen if some student of spiritual science had taken note twenty-five years ago of the perturbing agencies which were visible throughout the religious world, he might have made a prediction of more significance than that of the French and English astronomers. It might even then have been perceived, what is still more evident at the present day—that an ancient religious belief was about to disappear from civilization. The traditional Latin preternatural and numerous occurrences was giving place to a conviction of the permanence and universality of natural law.

Among the consequences of this change in opinion Mr. Owen, for its bearing on the narratives of the New Testament. If natural law be inexorable he suggests that either the wonderful works ascribed by the evangelists to Christ were not performed, or else they were not miracles. But no believer in the purity and integrity of Christ can admit the former supposition, which throws discredit on his teachings and his character. If then they were performed in accordance with natural law, and natural law is universal and unchangeable, we may expect similar phenomena at the present time.

Another important fact, according to Mr. Owen, is to be taken into account. Religious opinion is divided into two antagonistic schools. The one bases spiritual truth on miracles, and is represented by a church of vast power, with centuries of memory which claims to be infallible. The other is of far more recent date, in harmony, to a certain degree, with the spirit of the age, and professing to move in the line of progress, but shackled by the indifference of its members, and torn by internal dissensions on points of vital moment. With such contending influences in the religious world, Mr. Owen deems it perfectly natural that a solution of the difficulty should be found in the revelation of a new order of phenomena, similar to those recorded in the New Testament, marvellous in appearance, but the product of universal law in reality. An enlightened observer might have predicted the appearance of such manifestations, and like Le Verrier, who foretold the discovery of a planet, might have announced the coming of a new phase of spiritualism under the operation of natural law.

Slight and tenuous as this analogy will doubtless appear to most of our readers, it furnishes the key to the work of Mr. Owen, who has expended a great amount of research and observation in support of a theory which can be no claim to the character of a scientific principle. The prophet of this lower world is as yet more recent date, in harmony, to a certain degree, with the spirit of the age, and professing to move in the line of progress, but shackled by the indifference of its members, and torn by internal dissensions on points of vital moment. With such contending influences in the religious world, Mr. Owen deems it perfectly natural that a solution of the difficulty should be found in the revelation of a new order of phenomena, similar to those recorded in the New Testament, marvellous in appearance, but the product of universal law in reality. An enlightened observer might have predicted the appearance of such manifestations, and like Le Verrier, who foretold the discovery of a planet, might have announced the coming of a new phase of spiritualism under the operation of natural law.

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Before we had any demonstrations the prophecies requested us to wait until the domestic bird returned. There were two species of birds in the room, and Mrs. Underhill's opinion was, "As to the cock, there was no one in the parlor, nor any one in the dining-room except the three persons who, along with myself, assisted at the setting." These persons were Mr. Underhill and Charles Underhill, and others.

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